Sustainability Strategy 2026-2030

Sustainability Strategy
Sponsor: CEO and Principal
Version 1.0 (Jan 2026)
Next review: Jan 2028

MLA College is committed to helping achieve the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.
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1. Executive Summary

1.1 MLA College is uniquely positioned to lead in sustainability. The industries we serve are among the most significant contributors to global emissions and environmental impact. Equally, they are among the most critical to solving the climate crisis.

1.2 The focus on sustainability reflects both sector responsibility and institutional strategy. Maritime, logistics, supply chain and global development industries are undergoing rapid regulatory, technological and environmental transition driven by decarbonisation targets, evolving international standards, and growing societal expectations.

1.3 This strategy sets out how MLA College will embed sustainability into every aspect of our mission: teaching, research, operations, partnerships, and culture. It aligns our academic offer, professional services, and institutional behaviour with the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the UK's net-zero ambitions, and the expectations of regulators, students, partners, and employers.

1.4 Our ambition is to become:

- A recognised global leader in sustainability, maritime, and logistics education;
- A low-impact, digitally-led institution;
- A catalyst for change across industry, policy, and practice; and
- A community that models responsible, ethical, and inclusive behaviour.

1.5 This is not a marketing exercise; it represents a whole-college transformation in how MLA College operates. The focus is on embedding sustainability within governance, decision-making, partnership working, and organisational culture, ensuring that planning, risk management, quality processes and institutional growth are aligned with long-term environmental and social responsibility

2. Context and Drivers

2.1 **External Drivers**

- Climate emergency and global decarbonisation targets
- Maritime and logistics sectors under intense regulatory and commercial pressure to decarbonise, driven in part by the International Maritime Organisation's revised 2023 greenhouse-gas strategy, mandatory carbon-intensity measures such as EEXI and CII, and the sector's transition toward net-zero emissions targets.
- UN SDGs and growing expectation of institutional alignment
- UK HE regulatory focus on governance, risk, and long-term sustainability (OfS)
- Employer demand for graduates with sustainability literacy and systems thinking
- Student expectation that institutions demonstrate ethical leadership

2.2 **Internal Drivers**

- MLA's mission to shape global professionals
- Our distance-learning model and international reach
- Growth ambitions and Degree Awarding Powers journey
- Expansion into CPD and micro-credentials
- Partnerships with UN bodies, CIFAL centres, and global institutions

2.3 Together, these external and internal drivers require MLA College to embed sustainability not as a standalone initiative but as a guiding principle within institutional practice. The College will therefore prioritise sustainable approaches to governance, partnership working, operational decision-making and risk management, ensuring that environmental and social considerations are reflected in how programmes are developed, delivered and supported across a distributed, digital learning environment.

3. Vision

3.1 By 2030, MLA College will be recognised for integrating sustainability into institutional strategy, governance and operations, ensuring long-term resilience and positive global impact through how the College works as an organisation.

3.2 We will:

- Equip every learner with sustainability competence;
- Operate as a low-impact, digitally-enabled institution;
- Influence industry practice at scale;
- Contribute meaningfully to the UN SDGs; and
- Embed sustainability into governance and decision-making.

4. Strategic Pillars

4.1 **Pillar 1: Sustainable Curriculum & Learning**

Objective: Ensure every MLA learner develops the knowledge, skills, and mindset required to lead in a sustainable global economy.

Actions:

- Map all programmes against the UN SDGs and embed sustainability learning outcomes
- Integrate climate, ESG, and systems-thinking content across all awards
- Ensure all new programmes include explicit sustainability competencies
- Expand sustainability-focused pathways (e.g. Sustainable Maritime Operations, Green Supply Chains)
- Scale ByteSize CPD aligned to SDGs in partnership with UNITAR/CIFAL
- Introduce a core “Sustainability Literacy” framework for all students

Measures:

- 100% of programmes mapped to SDGs by 2027
- Sustainability outcomes in all programme specifications
- Growth in sustainability-focused enrolments and CPD learners

4.2 **Pillar 2: Research, Innovation & Thought Leadership**

Objective: Position MLA College as a recognised voice in sustainable innovation and applied research, influencing professional practice through partnership, digital knowledge exchange and globally relevant thought leadership.

Actions:

- Establish an MLA Sustainability & Maritime Futures Hub, The Hub will support institutional maturity, enable structured knowledge exchange and strengthen MLA College's role as a contributor to sustainability.
- Publish applied research and insight relating to sustainability, environmental transition and organisational transformation.
- Host annual global sustainability forums (virtual and physical)
- Enable opportunities for staff and students to contribute to industry insight, white papers and sector dialogue.
- Partner with industry to pilot sustainable practice.

Measures:

- Industry partnerships formed around sustainability projects
- MLA cited in sector sustainability discourse

4.3 Pillar 3: Sustainable Operations

Objective: Minimise MLA's environmental footprint and model best practice. MLA College will integrate sustainability into all operations by reducing resource use, emissions, and waste, while promoting efficient and ethical practices. Growth will be balanced with environmental responsibility through measurable targets, regular monitoring, and transparent reporting. Employees, partners, and suppliers are expected to support a culture of sustainability, ensuring organisational development protects natural resources and delivers long-term value.

Actions:

- Improve energy efficiency across buildings, equipment, and digital infrastructure
- Monitor water use and promote water-saving practices
- Embed circular economy principles (reuse, repair, refurbish before replacement)
- Reduce single-use materials and prioritise durable, low-impact alternatives
- Promote sustainable food and event practices where applicable
- Staff engagement and training on environmental best practice
- Measure wider environmental impact (materials, pollution, and supply chain impacts)
- Publish annual sustainability progress updates to ensure transparency
- Establish a baseline carbon footprint
- Commit to a Net Zero pathway
- Reduce travel through digital-first operations
- Sustainable procurement policy
- Waste reduction and paper-light operations
- Green hosting and IT practices

Measures:

- Annual ESG reporting
- Reduction in per-student operational emissions
- % of suppliers meeting sustainability standards

4.4 Pillar 4: Partnerships & Global Impact

Objective: Leverage MLA's global reach to drive sustainability at scale.

Actions:

- Embed sustainability objectives in all MoUs and partnerships
- Expand UN and CIFAL relationships
- Develop industry-led sustainability challenges for students
- Support alumni as sustainability champions
- Build regional impact hubs

Measures:

- Number of sustainability-aligned partnerships
- Global learner reach on SDG-aligned programmes
- Alumni engagement in sustainability initiatives

4.5 Pillar 5: Governance, Culture & Capability

Objective: Embed sustainability into how MLA is led and operated.

Actions:

- Establish a Sustainability Steering Group reporting to SMG/Board
- Appoint a Sustainability Lead
- Integrate sustainability into risk, strategy, and investment decisions
- Staff CPD in sustainability and ESG
- Annual sustainability report

Measures:

- Sustainability embedded in governance frameworks
- Staff participation in sustainability CPD
- Board-level oversight and reporting

5. Implementation Roadmap

5.1 Phase 1 (2026–2027)

- Governance structures established
- Carbon baseline completed
- Curriculum SDG mapping
- Sustainability framework defined
- Pilot CPD expansion

Phase 2 (2027–2028)

- New sustainability pathways launched
- Operational reductions implemented
- Research hub established
- First annual sustainability report

Phase 3 (2029–2030)

- Net Zero trajectory embedded
- Global recognition as sector leader
- Scaled global partnerships

6. Risk and Opportunity

6.1 Risks:

- Perception of greenwashing
- Resource constraints
- Cultural resistance

6.2 Mitigations:

- Evidence-led reporting
- Phased delivery
- Clear leadership and ownership

6.3 Opportunities:

- Market differentiation
- New revenue streams (CPD)
- Stronger employer partnerships
- Enhanced regulatory credibility

7. Success Indicators

7.1 By 2030 MLA will demonstrate:

- Sustainability embedded in all academic provision
- Measurable reduction in environmental impact
- Recognised thought leadership
- Global partnerships aligned to SDGs
- A culture where sustainability is business-as-usual